

REMARKS

I. Introduction

With the cancellation herein without prejudice of claims 1, 5, 8 and 12, claims 2 to 4, 6, 7, 9 to 11 and 14 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants note with appreciation the acknowledgment of the claim for foreign priority and the indication that all certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the previously filed Information Disclosure Statement, PTO-1449 paper and cited reference.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter contained in claims 6 and 13. In this regard, the Examiner will note that each of claims 6 and 13 has been rewritten herein in independent form to include all of the limitations of its respective base claim and any intervening claims. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claims 6 and 13 are in condition for immediate allowance.

Claim 7 depends from claim 6 and is therefore also believed to be in condition for immediate allowance.

Claim 14 depends from claim 13 and is therefore also believed to be in condition for immediate allowance.

Furthermore, claims 2 to 4 have been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 6, and claims 9 to 11 have been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 13. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claims 2 to 4 and 9 to 11 are in condition for immediate allowance.

III. Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 12 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,017,847 ("Leistenschneider"). While Applicants do not necessarily agree with the merits of this rejection, to facilitate matters, claims 1, 5, 8 and 12 have been canceled herein without prejudice, claim 2 has been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 6, which was indicated to

include allowable subject matter, and claim 9 has been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 13, which was indicated to include allowable subject matter. It is therefore respectfully submitted that the present rejection is moot, and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. Rejection of Claims 3, 4, 7, 10, 11 and 14 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 3, 4, 7, 10, 11 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Leistenschneider.

As regards claim 7, since claim 7 depends from claim 6, which was indicated to include allowable subject matter, it is respectfully submitted that Leistenschneider does not render unpatentable claim 7 for at least the reasons that claim 6 was indicated to include allowable subject matter.

As regards claim 14, since claim 14 depends from claim 13, which was indicated to include allowable subject matter, it is respectfully submitted that Leistenschneider does not render unpatentable claim 14 for at least the reasons that claim 13 was indicated to include allowable subject matter.

As regards claims 3, 4, 10 and 11, while Applicants do not necessarily agree with the merits of this rejection, to facilitate matters, claims 3 and 4 have been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 6, which was indicated to include allowable subject matter, and claims 10 and 11 have been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 13, which was indicated to include allowable subject matter.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present rejection is moot, and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

V. Conclusion

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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